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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 004007

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR G/TIP, NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/10/2015

TAGS: PHUM PREL PGOV KCRM KU

SUBJECT: TIP UPDATE: LABOR MINISTRY ADVISED KUWAIT LIKELY  
TO REMAIN TIER 3; OFFICIAL REVIEWS PENDING LEGISLATION

REF: A. SECSTATE 163401

1B. KUWAIT 3603

1C. KUWAIT 3412

1D. KUWAIT 3158

1E. SECSTATE 108156

Classified By: DCM Matthew Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) DCM opened a September 10 meeting with Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL) Acting Undersecretary Mohammed Al-Kandari with a briefing on Kuwait's tier reclassification status as part of the 2005 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report. While reiterating that the White House had not yet released an official determination, DCM informed the U/S that the Secretary had recommended that Kuwait remain Tier 3 but receive a full waiver of sanctions (ref A). While Kuwait had taken steps to satisfy the action plan (ref E), in the assessment led by G/TIP, there were unfulfilled items regarding revisions to the labor law, establishment of shelters and implementation of a new contract for maids.

12. (C) Al-Kandari, in the latest in a series of TIP-related updates (ref C), reported that the Minister of Social Affairs sent a letter September 6 to the Council of Ministers urging passage of a law banning underage camel racing, in line with other GCC countries, to replace the current ministerial decree prohibiting the practice. In another legislative move, the U/S said that the Council has already agreed to submit the revised labor law covering expatriate workers except domestic servants (ref D) to the National Assembly for approval. The Parliament, scheduled to reconvene in October, would probably address the labor law issue in November or December, in Al-Kandari's estimation.

13. (C) In addition to a new three-party contract for maids scheduled to take effect October 1 (ref B), Al-Kandari added that some MPs, including independent Saleh Ashour, have discussed introducing laws in the National Assembly, which would protect maids from exploitation. He reported that current Ministry of Interior (MOI) regulations ban abusive sponsors from obtaining new maids by placing their names on a "blacklist." In fact, he clarified, those on the blacklist cannot process any MOI transactions or paperwork until they reimburse the Ministry for the cost of repatriating the abused under their sponsorship.

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